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# Follow Her Lead

Leadership Lessons for Women As They  
Journey From the Backroom to the Boardroom

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**DR. ANITA DAVIS-DEFOE**

*Author of A Woman's Guide to Soulful Living:  
Seven Keys to Life and Work Success*

*Afia*Press

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# DEDICATION

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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO women and girls everywhere as they seek to discover the leadership treasures nestled inside of them; aim to define their leadership effectiveness based upon their own terms and not by the limits of socialization and stereotypical expectations; and purposefully determine their own destinies in their lives and within organizations. No matter where you find yourself right now, know that your possibilities are endless, and your potential is even greater. So, put on your favorite stilettos, and get to stepping.

**ALSO BY ANITA DAVIS-DEFOE**

A Woman's Guide to Soulful Living:  
Seven Keys to Life and Work Success

Soulful One: For Girls as They Journey to Greatness

Tropical Escapes (A Novel)

## **WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING . . .**

DR. ANITA DEFOE'S LATEST BOOK is a treasure chest full of insights on key principles of effective leadership. Within these pages, you will find an unlimited amount of wisdom and guidance whether you are at the beginning stages of becoming a leader or you are seeking information to become a better leader. The ideas presented in this book are simple, clear, and easy to grasp...yet profound.

This book is definitely a guide for helping women to unleash their leadership greatness from within. What a tragedy to go throughout life never realizing the greatness that was within you. Sadly, so many women take their greatness to their grave without ever tapping into it.

Dr. DeFoe understands what it takes to be a leader. So often we view leadership based upon a person's job title or position, which is far from the truth. To survive in the years to come, successful organizations-in business, in government, in the nonprofit world-will have to undergo a profound culture change. Their people will have to think quicker, work smarter, dream wilder, and relate to each other in very different ways.

Most important of all, this cultural change will require a whole new breed of leader, a leader unlike the bosses most of us have worked for and some of us perhaps have become. The day has long since passed when a company can be run with a bullwhip and a chair.

The leaders of tomorrow will have to establish a real vision and a sense of values for the organizations they wish to lead. These leaders will have to communicate and motivate far more effectively than leaders of the past. It's very difficult to motivate and communicate if you have not been guided properly. The timing of this book is perfect with the collapsing of the auto

industry, a failing economy and countless people who are facing job loss daily. In times like these, we need leaders to emerge. Dr. DeFoe's life is a living testimony on what she is writing about, as she left a secure, cushy, high salaried job to follow her passion which is providing training to help women tap into their greatness, so the messenger is the message. That is leadership and greatness at its best.

—Columbus Copeland, Inspirational Speaker  
Author of *The Art Of Overcoming*

WOMAN OFFER UNIQUE QUALITIES to leadership positions because they are socialized to incorporate relational styles with their use of power. Dr. Anita Davis-DeFoe understands the rich personal power women possess and she encourages them to use it...to create a better world.

—Dr. Anne Mody Lewis, Psychotherapist  
Author, *Me, Again! The Untold Story of Every Woman's Life*

DR. ANITA DAVIS-DEFOE has captured the fears, dreams and challenges of women worldwide, and created a guide to show the homemaker, the entrepreneur, and the corporate strategist that they already possess the tools needed to lead and be successful in all areas of their lives.

—Nerissa Golden, Speaker  
Author, *The Making of a Caribbeanpreneur: Strategies for Overcoming Fear and Building Wealth*

STORY TELLING HAS BEEN an integral part of black history for centuries, used to pass down long held traditions and customs, but equally important to teach.

We can all remember some story told to us by parents and grandparents to reinforce a particular life lesson. The story made it very simple and effective, allowing for rapid and retentive learning. I would dare say that we learn and retain far more from stories than from actual textbook and traditional teaching.

Anita Davis-DeFoe has tapped into this rich tradition allowing readers of *Follow Her Lead*, to quickly grasp and understand the nuances and intricacies of leadership and how

# **AWAKENING THE IN-HER LEADER**

WOMAN IS IN THE PROCESS OF reawakening and remembering her purpose, value and responsibility as a leader and as a collaborator in the shaping of business, culture, history, and society. "Follow Her Lead" is an initiation into that process and what I hope will become part of a new model and a new tradition in leadership training.

For millennia, women have nurtured, supported and guided each other through the transition from Maiden to Maid to Wise Woman with the use of story and gatherings. Those practices and traditions have been instrumental in the cultivation not only of great women leaders but great orchestrators of destinies both big and small. This book empowers women to walk that same path. It is a crucial path and a rite of passage through a world of self-discovery that helps to release fears and limiting beliefs; 'unstifle' women's voices, visions, and creativity; and awaken the true power and artistry of the leader within.

Whatever the outer manifestations, the leader's journey is ultimately an inner journey because in the process of overcoming external obstacles, she must come to embrace her inner self. It is the light of this inner self—her own inner brilliance—that creates the path that others are drawn to follow. Dr. Defoe's work helps women to uncover their leadership brilliance and keep their eyes on the shine.

By taking the wisdom of this book to heart, applying it, and using it as a tool to share and build community, readers will witness tremendous growth and maturity as women, leaders, and as human beings.

—**Antonia M, PhD, Host of the Inner Power Hour Radio Show**  
**Author, the *Inner Power Workbook* and the InnerPowerment Curriculum for leaders, women and youth**

# THE PATHWAY

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Leadership PATH 1	Knowing and Leading Self
Leadership PATH 2	Servant Leadership
Leadership PATH 3	Visionary Leadership
Leadership PATH 4	Strategic Leadership
Leadership PATH 5	Inspirational Leadership
Leadership PATH 6	Process Management Leadership
Leadership PATH 7	Focus Leadership
Leadership PATH 8	Change Management Leadership
Leadership PATH 9	Transformational Leadership
Leadership PATH 10	Legacy Leadership



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**FOLLOW HER LEAD**

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# FORETHOUGHT

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## Embrace the Leadership Journey

LEADERSHIP IS A MYSTERIOUS blend of managerial acumen, strategic vision, operational efficiency, performance management, tactical planning, emotional intelligence, and the capacity to inspire others to marshal all of their abilities in support of a common mission.

Leadership is the nourishing ingredient which can ignite an organization to flourish, or stifle to the point that it languishes in a sea of mediocrity. For far too long, when the word leadership was mentioned, immediately thoughts of a “he” came to mind. But if one reviews the characteristics attributed to effective leaders, skills like:

- Y The creation of an organizational vision such that people share it and work tirelessly to bring it to fruition, or;
- Y Fostering communication networks and a culture that breeds trust, confidence and commitment, or maybe;
- Y To stir personal motivation so that people exert deliberate effort to achieve organizational goals, or what about;
- Y Building teams that tap into synergy, interdependence and performance excellence, and;
- Y Understanding that organizations are social systems which require tapping into emotional intelligence; or perhaps,
- Y Making calculated risks within the framework of an overall organizational strategy, and

Y Nurturing strategic collaborative relationships which support organizational goals and function as a catalyst for creating opportunities for goal achievement, this list can only cause one to wonder.

Wonder, if the word “she” should be in the dialogue somewhere, because all of the critical skills that leadership gurus say are essential, certainly women embody, particularly, when you consider that females are socialized to be nurturers, caretakers, facilitators, conveners, listeners, encouragers, organizers, and consensus builders. The dimensions of the leadership parameters for women are intricately linked to opportunities for relationship building, fostering consensus, demonstrating caring, supporting the growth and development of others.

Leadership and management of organizations have shifted from transactional functioning, the old “step and fetch it” mentality; to an essential need for transformational cultures which fully engage and encourage the participation of workers at all levels. No longer can performance excellence be achieved in autocratic climates, with orders and assignments dished out without any consideration for the motivations, interests or personality of the individual holding the plate. Women more often use a transformational style of management; an approach where improving or “beautifying” the organization so to speak is the primary objective. In fact, transformational leaders are more like good teachers, rather than traditional bosses. Some even go as far to say that women make better leaders than men in today’s knowledge age which is spurred on by technological advancement; the delicate, yet ever expanding impact of full throttled globalization.

Others herald a “feminization of leadership” as growing numbers of organizations are being led by women. Even still, the statistics are dismal as the number of women on pathways to leading organizations is still small compared with men. In countless organizations, women are still relegated to the backroom, where they strategize and implement organizational projects and manage change, while someone else, typically a male, enjoys the credit and the kudos, more often rarely acknowledging the efforts of the staff. Quite often, women simply accept, and even start to believe, that perhaps this is the

# LEADERSHIP PATH 1



The Roots of Leadership

**KNOWING SELF**

# THE GOLDEN MIRROR

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## Leading Begins With Knowing

EVERY MORNING, BEFORE THE break of dawn, Hope and Joye made the trek down the winding path to the Garibaldi Springs to frolic in the soothing warm pond, before starting the day. While traipsing in the healing waters, Hope and Joye would chat about their hopes and dreams, all of their future aspirations.

Joye shared time and time again, “I plan to change the world, and I can not wait to help people around the globe. Just the thought of using my talents and intellect is exciting. What about you Hope, what do you see yourself doing in the future?”

With a puzzled expression, Hope stammered, “I don’t know, I am just not sure. Can I share something with you Joye?”

Not giving the question a second thought, Joye said watching her friend intently, “Of course, Hope; you are my best friend, and you can ask me anything?”

Obviously getting her thoughts together, Hope began, “How can you be so sure that your future is bright? Quite honestly, I do not see myself accomplishing much in life. Sometimes, members of my family, some of my teachers, even people in my class at school tell me that I am not going to amount to much; they have even called me stupid. So, I guess I believe what they say about me. The only place where most of the people say positive things about me is at church, but even there I heard some of the ladies whispering and gossiping about my mother and the life she leads. I could not hear all of the details.”

Tears began to pour from Hope’s mesmerizing brown eyes, meshing with the waters of the Garibaldi Springs. Angered by what she had heard, as she hugged her best friend in an attempt

to comfort her, Joye said, “Hope, you should be ashamed of yourself for talking like that. You are smart, and you can accomplish anything you set your mind to do, it sounds like you have already given up and that is not like you. It does not matter what people say, even family and friends. What matters most is what you believe, you Hope, you and no one else. No one can stop you in life, Hope; no one but you, so promise me you will remember that always.”

Hesitating for what seemed like an eternity, finally Hope replied, “I will try to remember that Joye, I will try.” The brilliance of the morning sun reminded the two friends that it was time to get out of the springs, go get dressed and head off to school.

As they sauntered up the pathway to their respective houses, Hope saw something glittering in the midst of a bed of sunflowers. Even though the sunflowers had already begun to track the journey of the sun across the light blue sky, whatever this thing was, it radiated a powerful captivating light.

Excited Hope said to Joye, pointing to the beam of light, “Look, there is something shining over there. I wonder what it could be,” as she pushed the sunflowers aside following the light to its source. There lying on the ground was an immaculate and ornate golden mirror, the design was unique, with a rose etched on each side. Hope picked up the mirror, and after giving it the once over, she turned to show it to Joye.

“Oh what a beautiful mirror Hope, I wonder who it belongs to; the sunflowers are so tall, who ever lost it has probably given up on ever finding it again. It looks like it has been there for a while,” Joye remarked inspecting the mirror closely as their faces were illuminated by the morning sunlight.

“I know Joye, but what should I do. I would not know where to begin looking for the owner. This mirror looks like it was especially made for someone,” Hope peered into the mirror and each time she did, she felt happy inside. It was the strangest feeling, something she had never experienced until that moment.

“Well, we can keep an eye out in the newspapers and see if anyone claims the mirror in the lost and found section, other than that, there is nothing much you can do; obviously this golden mirror was made just for you; you saw it and you